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**Author(s):** Ali, Alee Rizwan

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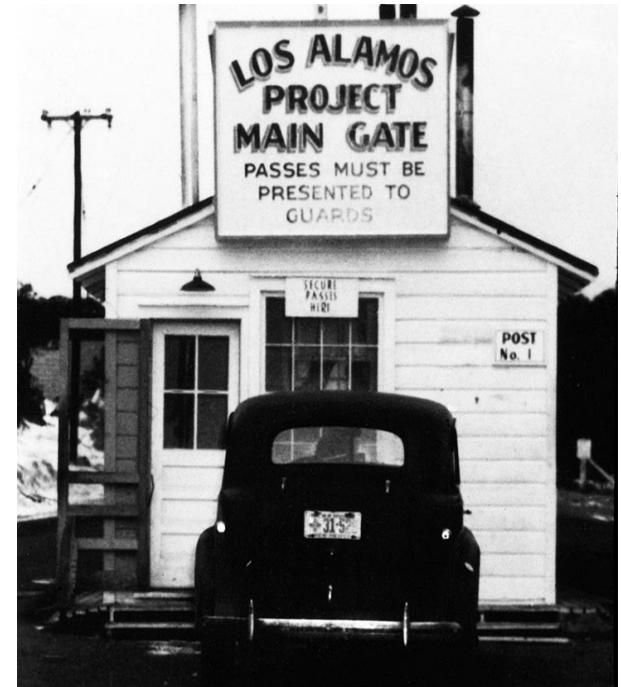
# NATIONAL SECURITY RESEARCH CENTER



# Project Y Badge Photo Collection



Rizwan Ali  
Director, NSRC  
Los Alamos National Laboratory  
[rizwan@lanl.gov](mailto:rizwan@lanl.gov)







# About the Project Y Badge Photo Collection (1943-1945)

- The NSRC has several hundred badge photos of staff who worked at Los Alamos during the wartime Manhattan Project.
- The collection held by the NSRC represents an estimated 30% of the total badge photos taken at the secret wartime lab in Los Alamos, called Project Y.
- It is believed the majority of the badge photos of Project Y employees were destroyed or lost decades ago.
- The badge photos in the NSRC collections include famous staff, such as Oppenheimer, Groves, and many Nobel laureates who worked at Los Alamos.
- The existing photos have deteriorated significantly over the decades due to normal aging and previous poor handling procedures.
  - Many photos had tears and non-archival tape applied.

# Physical restoration (FY20)



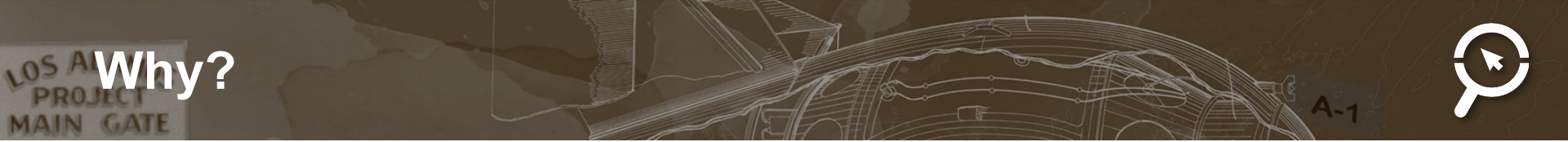
- The NSRC worked with an outside archivist who specializes in preserving old photos.
- The archivist removed the tape, glue, and debris.
- The photos were then placed in archival-quality sleeves.
- Physical restoration was a necessary first step to stop the rapid degradation of the images and to correct previous poor practices.
- Long-term preservation requires careful digitization and digital restoration.





# Digital restoration (started in FY22)

- There had been no previous attempts to digitally restore this photo collection.
- Digital restoration of a small portion of the Project Y Badge Photo Collection began in FY22 so they could be used for upcoming NSRC projects.
- Digital restoration of this collection was handled personally by NSRC Director Riz Ali, who has expertise in this area.
- The goal was to digitally restore the images as close to their original appearances as possible.
- A peer-review process was used on the first batch to ensure the digitally-restored photos were historically accurate representations of the original photographs.
  - This was important because some of the image processing tools used were only recently introduced into the market.
- Each photo took 30-90 minutes to digitally restore.



# Why?

- The Project Y Badge Photo Collection is an important part of the Lab's past. The Manhattan Project was the start of the LANL we know today and that workforce was the first to dedicate themselves to our national security mission.
- Badge photo preservation is an example of both the NSRC's material preservation as well as its legacy preservation.
- The NSRC ensures our history doesn't literally disappear, be it photos or weapons data.



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# A Sample of the Digitally Restored Project Y Badge Photos

*This is the first time since WWII that anyone has seen the Project Y badge images as they were likely taken in the 1940s.*

Original condition in 2019



After physical restoration



After digital restoration





Original condition in 2019



After physical restoration



After digital restoration



Original condition in 2019



After physical restoration



After digital restoration





Original condition in 2019



After physical restoration



After digital restoration



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